

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A shipping management computer system, said computer system programmed to:

determine for each of a plurality of users upon input by each user of a particular origin postal code and a particular destination postal code an origin rating zone identifier corresponding to the particular origin postal code for each of a plurality of carriers, and a destination rating zone identifier corresponding to the particular destination postal code for each of the plurality of carriers, wherein each user accesses the shipping management computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, and wherein each user client computer device has an individual electronic connection to the global communications network.

2. The shipping management computer system of Claim 1, said computer system further programmed to:

calculate for each of the plurality of users upon each request by each user a preview shipping rate for each of a plurality of services offered by each of the plurality of carriers for shipping a particular parcel according to a set of parcel characteristics shipping rules for the particular carrier and according to a set of pricing rules for each particular service offered by the particular carrier as applied to a set of parcel specifications for the particular parcel input by the particular user and as applied to the origin rating zone identifier and the destination rating zone identifier.

3. A method using a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by any one of a plurality of carriers, the method comprising:

determining for each of a plurality of users upon input by each user of a particular origin postal code and a particular destination postal code an origin rating zone identifier corresponding to the particular origin postal code for each of a plurality of carriers, and a destination rating zone identifier corresponding to the particular destination postal code for

1 each of the plurality of carriers, wherein each user accesses the shipping management  
2 computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, and  
3 wherein each user client computer device has an individual electronic connection to the  
4 global communications network.

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6 4. The method of Claim 3, said method comprising:  
7 calculating for each of the plurality of users upon each request by each user a  
8 preview shipping rate for each of a plurality of services offered by each of the plurality of  
9 carriers for shipping a particular parcel according to a set of parcel characteristics shipping  
10 rules for the particular carrier and according to a set of pricing rules for each particular  
11 service offered by the particular carrier as applied to a set of parcel specifications for the  
12 particular parcel input by the particular user and as applied to the origin rating zone identifier  
13 and the destination rating zone identifier.

14  
15 5. A computer program product embodying computer program instructions for  
16 execution by a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by  
17 any one of a plurality of carriers, the computer program product comprising:  
18 a set of program instructions for determining for each of a plurality of users upon  
19 input by each user of a particular origin postal code and a particular destination postal code  
20 an origin rating zone identifier corresponding to the particular origin postal code for each of a  
21 plurality of carriers, and a destination rating zone identifier corresponding to the particular  
22 destination postal code for each of the plurality of carriers, wherein each user accesses the  
23 shipping management computer system over a global communications network using a client  
24 computer device, and wherein each user client computer device has an individual electronic  
25 connection to the global communications network.

26  
27 6. The computer program product of Claim 5, said computer program product  
28 comprising:  
29 a set of program instructions for calculating for each of the plurality of users upon

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each request by each user a preview shipping rate for each of a plurality of services offered by each of the plurality of carriers for shipping a particular parcel according to a set of parcel characteristics shipping rules for the particular carrier and according to a set of pricing rules for each particular service offered by the particular carrier as applied to a set of parcel specifications for the particular parcel input by the particular user and as applied to the origin rating zone identifier and the destination rating zone identifier.